



DEPARTMENT OF PUBLIC SAFETY AND CORRECTIONS

Public Safety Services



V. J. BELLA
STATE FIRE MARSHAL

MIKE FOSTER, JR.
GOVERNOR

MEMORANDUM

July 23, 2001

TO: All OSF Employees
FR: V.J. Bella *VJB*
RE: Agency Policy for Volunteer Firefighters

The purpose of this memorandum is to explain the position of this agency with respect to R.S. 23:893, which reads:

"No certified volunteer firefighter employed by the state of Louisiana shall be denied leave, work-related benefits, or employment for absentsing himself from said employment or the purpose of emergency response pursuant to such certification. An emergency shall be an unexpected occurrence that threatens life or property to which an established volunteer fire department or fire protection district responds while the certified volunteer firefighter is engaged in the normal course of state employment and to which the certified volunteer firefighter employed by the state of Louisiana may timely respond to utilize skills which enhance the preservation of life and property."

R.S. 23:893 clearly expresses a policy of mandatory granting of leave to certified volunteer firefighters employed by the state of Louisiana when responding to an emergency.

I have always encouraged my staff to be active in community endeavors, but never at the expense of this agency. I believe that service as a volunteer firefighter is useful both to the community and to this agency. However, I insist that you understand that your primary responsibility is your employment at this agency.

R.S. 23:893 requires that a state employee/certified volunteer firefighter must *timely respond* to an *emergency* in order to claim mandatory leave time. It is therefore unlikely that an employee who is working outside the territory covered by his fire department could invoke R.S. 23:893. The emergency should occur in such close proximity to the place where the employee is working that electronic notification is unnecessary. Therefore, electronic notification by volunteer fire department(s) shall not be utilized during working hours. In all cases of timely employee response to an emergency, supervisory notification shall be made as soon as possible, and preferably prior to the response. All volunteer activity undertaken during working hours is to be done by utilizing leave time and shall be properly reported.

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Smoke Detectors Save Lives!!

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